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Abstract

The role of education in promoting social mobility has been highlighted in the literature. But how much mobility have high-quality universities yielded historically? This research focuses on a case study of historical social mobility in access to high-quality education in Colombia. By using estimations based on unique surnames and their relative representation among graduates from Universidad de los Andes from 1949 to 2018, intergenerational mobility coefficients are estimated for ethnic and elite surnames. These estimations provide new evidence of long-term social mobility patterns in Colombia and reveal low mobility and persistence in the historical elite, as well as underrepresentation of ethnic groups. It is further concluded that this methodological approach can be a useful tool for studying countries with limitations in historical data for measuring social mobility.